1/- 11039

THE

LIBERTINE, &c.

(Price One Shilling.)

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

LIBERTINE.

A

POEM.

Cum luxuria nobis, cum amentia, cum ſcelere certandum eſt.

CICERO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

M.DCC.LXXXIV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

SUCH is the weakneſs of human capacity, and ſuch the nature of vice, that it preſents to our view the moſt powerful allurements; and we, not being aware of the artifice, fall into many hurtful ſnares. I think no man whatever, ſenſible of its evil tendency, would willingly ſubmit to be governed by its dictates. But it does not attempt to work upon the ſuperior faculties of the ſoul, till firſt it has attached the paſſions to its intereſts. Though, in *reality*, it can only involve in *miſery*, yet it promiſes the greateſt imaginable *pleaſure*. Experience however has made it evident, that all its ſeeming pleaſure is, at beſt, the pleaſure of *inſtinct*, the pleaſure of a *beaſt*. When the paſſions are gained, the will becomes obdurate, and the underſtanding dark: and thus the natural order of things is totally reverſed. Nor is this the only evil attending the dominion

dominion of vice; (though this alone is truly alarming;) ſuch is the influence of example, eſpecially the example of perſons of rank and fortune, that the infection ſpreads, and overwhelms thouſands in miſery and ſhame.

Antiquity and cuſtom have rendered it, in a meaſure, the province of poetry to arraign, laſh, and expoſe wickedneſs and folly, whether moral or political. When this is done with temper and judgment, it is ſometimes attended with ſalutary effects. It is calculated to fortify the mind againſt the deluſions of vice and error: and ſometimes, by expoſing the delinquent to ſhame, creates a degree of inward remorſe; or, at leaſt, lays him under a kind of reſtraint, and is, ſo far, beneficial to ſociety. Whether the following attempt may be ſubſervient to the production of ſuch effects, I ſhall not pretend to determine.

Moſt, if not all, of the characters depicted in this poem, are exhibited in real life; and an intelligent reader will, without much difficulty perceive where they may be found. Neither am I conſcious to myſelf of having, in the ſmalleſt meaſure, exceeded the bounds of truth: on the contrary, I have choſen to keep within thoſe limits, to which juſt deſcription might, with propriety,

propriety, have led me. I confeſs I have made free with whatever came in my way, that appeared to me deſerving of public cenſure. Perhaps I ſhall be blamed by ſome of my readers for meddling with grave and ſerious things, (which I have done towards the latter end of the poem ;) yet, their candor, I am perſuaded, will believe me when I declare, I cannot help thinking, that vice, the more it aſſumes the maſk of goodneſs, is the more hurtful; and ought, on that account, the more ſeverely to be laſhed.

I have long been convinced, that man ought not to live for himſelf alone. There are reciprocal duties we owe each other, as partakers of the ſame common nature; and particularly, as members of the ſame body politic: and no one can acquit himſelf as a member of ſociety, who does not, in ſome meaſure, promote the common good. It is with equal beauty and propriety THOMSON ſays:

> An empty form
> Is the weak virtue, that amid the ſhade
> Lamenting lies, — ——— ——— ———
> While wickedneſs and folly, *kindred powers*,
> Confound the world.

Under this conviction, the following ſheets preſent themſelves to public view. I will not pretend to decry the merit of ſuch pieces on the ſubject, as may have appeared. I throw my mite into the public treaſury; and join with others in bearing a teſtimony againſt the madneſs of the preſent day: a day, in which the general good is baſely ſacrificed to the moſt ſordid avarice! No perſonal prejudice or diſlike whatever dictated the theme: I can truly ſay, that while I aim to expoſe the vice, I ſincerely pity the guilty, of every name.

Should theſe pages be the means to put any on their guard againſt the fatal ſnares which ſurround them; or to extricate one poor deluded wretch from the labyrinths of guilt, and direct him to the paths of virtue; I ſhall enjoy the ſatisfaction, not only of having promoted the happineſs of an individual; but of having done real ſervice to my country. A conſideration, which ought to rouſe every Briton to wiſe and generous action!

5 0059

THE

LIBERTINE.

A

POEM.

HERE, ſome, attracted by the force divine
Of Virtue and Religion, paint its worth;
Delineate its intrinſic excellence;
And ſweetly lead us to the great SUPREME.
There, ſome embark in virtuous Freedom's cauſe,
O ſacred name to Engliſhmen ſo dear!
Maintaining her juſt rights. Mine be th' employ
The LIBERTINE to trace through all his paths;

And point him out the foe of God and man.
O might the efforts of the muſe reform
The guilty age; and, while the vice ſhe paints,
With deep conviction pierce the wretch deprav'd,
Faſt ripening now for ruin and deſpair!

I dart my eye through ranks unnumber'd vaſt;
At one ſwift glance the thought ſtrikes forcible,
The libertine with any claſs not dwells
Excluſively. I ſee him breathe the air
Of pomp and ſtate: I view him in the walks
Of public life, ſtalking with lordly pride:
I ſee him bold the ſacred roſtrum mount:
And watch him in his more unnotic'd haunts.

A youth of higheſt rank on ſhores *Utopian*,
On whom a nation's hopes were plac'd, I've ſeen
With feet unhallow'd, trample on the name
Of R———, degrading foul his birth
And dignity. Debauchery and wine
Divide his diſſipated moments. He,

To

To ſhame and honor loſt, inſenſible,
The faireſt mark for pointed ſatyr ſtands.
Deprav'd, he ſcorns to waſte a thought ſublime
On deep concerns, momentous, of the ſtate,
Though in full expectation of a c——.
Such dull inſipid things far, far beneath
His more exalted notice lie. He runs
The nobler rounds of luxury and riot.
While honeſt Induſtry reclines her head,
He deigns, or to inſult the midnight guard,
Or to contract vile, nameleſs aches and pains,
The loathſome puniſhment of lawleſs luſt.

If diſſipation foul matures the thought;
If guilt ſtamps wiſdom on a ſickly brain;
If blacken'd infamy and vice prepare
To r— a ſtate for liberty renown'd;
Go, heedleſs youth, take large progreſſive ſtrides
In this thy well-mark'd courſe: then mount the ——:
Procure a miſcreant tribe of fawning ſlaves
To flatter well thy folly; to pollute

Thine ear with poiſonous maxims; bar effectual.
In ſilence deep the honeſt tongue; and ſeize
The rein p-———l: then, fill'd thy meaſure,
Fall headlong down the precipice of woe!

Thou Infinite! to mould the heart is thine,
And thine to keep. The h—— of E-———'s t——e
Preſerve: nor let contamination foul
E'er ſtain the offspring of illuſtrious ———;
Be thou the guardian of our future ——:
His, ours th' advantage, thine the grateful praiſe.

See where the lordly miniſter of ſtate
Stood high in office! His th' inceſſant taſk
To guide the helm political; preſerve
Inviolate the public faith; and poize,
In equilibrium juſt, the conſtitution.
No; I miſtake: his the more vile employ
Kingly prerogative to render hateful
By ſad abuſe and vaſt unbounded ſtretch;
His country of her deareſt rights to rob;

And bear, with iron hand, deſpotic ſway.
Mean were the arts he practis'd to obtain
The glittering thouſands to his poſt annex'd:
Theſe, not the public weal, the ſoul of office.
When at the council board, in artful guiſe
He deck'd his ſovereign will; and aim'd to force
E'en Majeſty itſelf to baſe compliance.

INDULGENT HEAVEN! fair Albion's prince defend
From the vile inſults of ambitious pride;
And let th' admiring world believe HE REIGNS.

With ſacrilegious hands, the bold invader
Each dear-bought privilege aſunder tore;
Nor heeded once the Nation's awful groan.
Where ſordid Avarice waves her magic wand,
Leading in myſtic dance her devotees,
His noxious influence wide around he pour'd:
Brib'd, threaten'd, bought, and ſold were puny boroughs:
Ignoble ſtoop'd they to his domineer,
The baſe ſupporters of his ruling paſſion.

Full

Full many a time the ſenate he harangued;
His ſpeeches dark, ſtill darker his deſigns:
Bill after bill, with latent miſchief fraught,
He fram'd; and vileſt ſycophants (their v—s
By *annual compliment* ſecur'd) applauded:
Millions and blood profuſe he flung away;
Sported with Britain; and deceiv'd his King.

Ye trans-atlantic plains, with human gore
Freſh ſteaming! ye in forceful terms declare
His wanton proweſs. His deſtroyful fang
Ye felt, and mourn'd aloud without redreſs;
Or ne'er had ſeparation made us twain.
Branded with infamy, his name your page
Hiſtoric will, to periods yet remote,
Hand down. Ne'er may the *North* wind hateful blow
Infectious through your wide extended coaſts!

Where hides RESPONSIBILITY her head?
She, lovely maid! alone can purify
Effectual the contaminated air

Of

Of Courts. Her operations oft were found,
In times of yore, ſalubrious and pleaſing.
Feſter'd the wounds of State? yon ſharpen'd ſteel,
Bleſt inſtrument! the ſure inciſion made;
Drain'd out the morbid matter; heal'd the land;
And ſet her life-blood in full circulation.
When ſwells the ſtateſman's mind with treaſons dark,
The well known ſtring, or axe, the wretch befits:
Theſe, *right applied*, to temperature proper
Would ſoon the daring libertine reduce.
Ah! ſhould the genius of my country rouſe,
And her inſulted rights with ſteady hand
Maintain; the lawleſs deſpot ſhe'd o'erwhelm
In foul diſgrace: grave Juſtice would applaud;
Nor Lenity herſelf would drop a tear.
When ſtain his guilty hands leſs hurtful crimes,
Temper'd with lenient mercy be the law
Of bold Retaliation. Equity
Our nature's frailty winks at, and forgives.

Full many a time the ſenate he harangued;
His ſpeeches dark, ſtill darker his deſigns:
Bill after bill, with latent miſchief fraught,
He fram'd; and vileſt ſycophants (their v—s
By *annual compliment* ſecur'd) applauded:
Millions and blood profuſe he flung away;
Sported with Britain; and deceiv'd his King.

Ye trans-atlantic plains, with human gore
Freſh ſteaming! ye in forceful terms declare
His wanton proweſs. His deſtroyful fang
Ye felt, and mourn'd aloud without redreſs;
Or ne'er had ſeparation made us twain.
Branded with infamy, his name your page
Hiſtoric will, to periods yet remote,
Hand down. Ne'er may the *North* wind hateful blow
Infectious through your wide extended coaſts!

Where hides RESPONSIBILITY her head?
She, lovely maid! alone can purify
Effectual the contaminated air

Of

Of Courts. Her operations oft were found,
In times of yore, ſalubrious and pleaſing.
Feſter'd the wounds of State? yon ſharpen'd ſteel,
Bleſt inſtrument! the ſure inciſion made;
Drain'd out the morbid matter; heal'd the land;
And ſet her life-blood in full circulation.
When ſwells the ſtateſman's mind with treaſons dark,
The well known ſtring, or axe, the wretch befits:
Theſe, *right applied*, to temperature proper
Would ſoon the daring libertine reduce.
Ah! ſhould the genius of my country rouſe,
And her inſulted rights with ſteady hand
Maintain; the lawleſs deſpot ſhe'd o'erwhelm
In foul diſgrace: grave Juſtice would applaud;
Nor Lenity herſelf would drop a tear.
When ſtain his guilty hands leſs hurtful crimes,
Temper'd with lenient mercy be the law
Of bold Retaliation. Equity
Our nature's frailty winks at, and forgives.

What is the power of office? whence its birth?
When individuals, for the common weal,
In ſolemn union firſt confederate join;
And form a *Public* whole, united, ſtrong;
In hands approv'd a power executive
They veſt; but not their birthright fling away,
Of free examination and controul:
Ne'er were Intelligences Rational
By Fate the ſlaves of lawleſs Power decreed.
Is public audit deem'd a country's bane?
The ſentiment let *baſe born* minds adopt:
While Gaul and Spain the fatal poiſon ſuck,
Loud let the nations hear, from pole to pole,
With pleaſing wonder, BRITONS *will be* FREE.
RESPONSIBILITY is Nature's offspring;
Favorite of Reaſon; and fair Virtue's friend.
Though oft ſeditious Faction has miſtaken;
And oft Malevolence the name abus'd;
While, arm'd with luſt of power, fierce deſperadoes
Their opponents eſcorted to the block;
Free let the *virtuous* PEOPLE ſpeak their mind,

No ſcrutiny the honeſt ſtateſman dreads:
Conſcious, her grateful ſmiles, to merit due,
His country will afford. The wretch alone,
Who on the nation's liberties would prey,
Shall meet her awful frown, and die accurs'd.

Thus generous Britons, when their native iſle
Was with a CHATHAM bleſt, with hearts elate,
His praiſes ſang. Thus Britain ſheds a tear,
While buſy Recollection ſtill renews
The moment when her FRIEND and FATHER died.

But Providence forbids to weep: behold
A PITT upriſing to adorn the land,
In whom ſtrict Virtue dwells, and Wiſdom ſound!
Together with his years our hopes increaſe.
Loud, and ſtill louder calls the nation! Go,
Generous youth, fulfil her hopes, the eye
Of Majeſty on thee not fix'd in vain.
Alike the prince's, and the people's friend;
Devoted to their ſervice; breathe the air

Unſullied of Integrity and Virtue.
Go, (like the prophet) catch thy father's mantle:
Go, deep imbibe his ſpirit: bleſs the nation:
(Much hopes Britannia; much expects in thee:)
So ſhall the laurel wreathe eternal grace
Thy brow rever'd; while prowling wolves of ſtate
Beneath the vengeance of their country fall.

View yon obſequious commoner! he ſtands
The pliant drudge of arbitrary Power;
And bows ſubmiſſive to his maſter's nod.
When in the ſolemn ſenate he appears,
Bold his effrontery! he labors hard
The nation to delude; while ſophiſtry
The place ſupplies of argument and truth.
He not the *People*'s language deigns to ſpeak;
Yet boaſts himſelf their *Repreſentative*.
Vile falſhood! popular advice contemn'd,
The cauſe alone he pleads of proud Oppreſſion.
The nation's cutpurſe! he inceſſant votes

Alike

Alike her treaſure and her rights away;
Still he avers he means his country's good.

Ye ſtubborn Britons! dare you bold refuſe
Your firm reliance on his *ipſe dixit?*
Still dare you from the *meaſure* judge the *man?*
He violent the britiſh frame attacks:
Your ſolemn charters he opprobrious calls
Mere ſheets of parchment with a dangling ſeal:
Why not believe him your devoted friend?
By artifice no longer dup'd; preferr'd
In evidence plain facts to warm profeſſions;
By long experience, deep felt, tutor'd ſafe;
Ye ſons of Freedom! well do you affirm
His ruling wiſh, to fix impregnable
His ground, where *golden* oders, pleaſing, breathe
Perfume; and ſave his prompters dying name.
A haughty libertine! a puny ſlave!
The ſcourge of Freedom! and the nation's curſe!

Britons! are ſuch the beings Wiſdom names
Your ſenators; your repreſentants? Theſe
The guardians of your liberties and laws?

REPRESENTATION! dear deluſive name!
'Tis ſolemn mockery all! all empty ſound!
Where ſpeak the people? where is heard their voice
Unbiaſs'd? Not the commons ſpeak it out.
Awed by the gilded bribe, here five electors
Two ſordid votes employ: their principles,
Their conſcience ſell, their country, and themſelves;
With loud *éclat* they ſhout his ſounding praiſe,
Whoſe hand profuſe deals out the weightieſt bribe;
With them, the only teſt of virtue! There
Two ſenators, to repreſent five thouſand,
Their ſeats obtain by ſuffrage uncontroul'd
Of their conſtituents. Here a million ſtand,
Attach'd, devoted to the common cauſe,
Unrepreſented. Falſe is the aſſertion:
"ENGLAND is govern'd by the law ſhe frames."

Why

Why not the repreſentants annual choſe?
Why not the ſuffrage equal, uncontroul'd?
Talk they of difficulty here? or danger?
RICHMOND! the grateful, pleaſing taſk be thine
To point out Nature's plan primeval, juſt;
And lead to Freedom's ſummit. Say to Britain:
"Rouſe: ſeek redreſs: nor, awed by ſtruggles long,
Taurus Philaridis of vulgar minds!
Fear to petition: ENGLAND *muſt* be heard."

Here walks a being oft by men miſnam'd
A *patriot:* ill the appellation ſuits!
Loud his profeſſions of a glowing zeal
For Britain's welfare: privileges, charters,
And liberties his conſtant darling themes.
Murmurs the hollow midnight breeze? he, wakeful,
Starts up alarm'd; while fond Imagination
Deſcries dark, boding plots againſt the land
By tories form'd. He, ſecond *Quixote!* bold
Unſheaths the truſty blade, and flies t'attack
The viſionary foe. Impeachments, blocks

Are

Are hung out *in terrorem*. Swift around
One buſy eyeball rolls to meet the plaudit
Of gazing crouds aſtoniſh'd ; t'other fix'd ;
Fix'd on WHITEHALL. The cockpit and the levee
Have *weighty* charms and *irreſiſtible :*
Theſe to enjoy, unwearied round the courſe
He runs of popular applauſe : his aims,
His fondeſt wiſhes all concentre here :
High expectation in the next arrange
Includes his name, and crowns his deareſt joys.

Talks he of private virtue ? Let the muſe
Diſcover where it lies conceal'd, ſequeſter'd
From public view : 'tis *private* rightly nam'd.
Yes ; he has virtues, A———d can tell :
Right virtuous is the ſcene her villa paints !
How ſhines his virtue at yon E O table !
He ſtakes a thouſand at a ſingle bet :
Well vers'd in all the artifice of game,
With horrid grin, he bilks the youthful p——e ;
And bears away the prize. Now leads his virtue

To

To mad intoxication, and the roar
Hideous of beaſts : and now perhaps a band
Secures of lawleſs ruffians to attack
The young pr-m—r, the hope, the joy of millions !
Such is the *virtuous* courſe he ſteers t'enjoy
The confidence of Britain, and her *caſh*.

Smiling he graſps the ſeals ; to him the gate
Of blooming Paradiſe ! when louring tempeſts
Riſe on him ſudden ; thwart awhile his hopes ;
And beat the monſter off. Still he renews
The fond attempt ; and takes with eager hand
The glittering prize. With yon ſatannic chief,
Who an infernal legion heads, commiſſion'd
By Beelzebub, (a legion oft miſtaken
For *commoners !)* in conference deep he ſits :
Theſe ſons of darkneſs blend their ſeparate force
In COALITION *ominous* ; then graſp
At power deſpotic ; and the world defy,
Or to defeat their aim, or break the league.

Where

Where now the oratoric patriot's zeal!
Where his profeſſions all? He ſits ſecure,
And laughs at popular credulity:
Not untam'd *Reynard* could more craft diſplay.
Now ſee him bending his pernicious care
O'er ASIA's wide extended plains! He longs
Without controul to rule the tawny tribes;
Without *reſponſibility* or *juſtice*:
Nor ſacred charters can prevail to bound
His eager wiſh; or from his graſp defend.
Now ſee him execrated by the nation;
Involv'd in blackeſt infamy; abandon'd,
By *all* deſerted, ſave whom Intereſt binds!
View the falſe wretch, the victim of his guilt!
Round his devoted neck his crimes hang ponderous;
Swift weigh him from his elevated ſeat;
And ſink him in th' abyſs of fell deſpair.

Chill runs my blood while Faction roars terrific
Through all the land; and foul contagion ſpreads,
Where circumambient odors ſhould prevail,

Gentle,

Gentle, ſalubrious! BRITANNIA feels
The ſmart; reclines her head; and mourns in ſighs
Deep-fetch'd her childrens plight: but Hope conſoles:
Hope tells: "In Providence's myſtic page,
Some kind, not-diſtant period noted ſtands,
When ENGLAND, rous'd, her dignity ſhall feel;
Shall cruſh the foe; and be for ever FREE."

His wiſhful eye the traveller throws around,
While bellowing peals and vivid flaſhes dart
Tremendous from the opening ſkies; and longs
Serener air to breathe, and taſte the calm.
So looks the eager muſe around; but awful
And dark remains the view: ſtill lours the gloom,
And thickens as it ſpreads. Scarce hopes my pen
To chaſe it back, or ſtop its baneful courſe.

Mark well that circle! pageantry, and ſhow,
And titles of nobility are there.
To theſe each rank ſubordinate looks up
With eager eye to catch the ruling manners.

But do Nobility and Virtue dwell
Under one common roof? Do titles bow,
And pay their homage at her ſacred ſhrine?
Too oft, alas! they ſtrive, at variance warm.
Lewdneſs, extravagance, and diſſipation,
And every vice here triumphs uncontroul'd.
Many the leſſer follies of the day
Not ſatiate: ſcorning *littleneſs* in *ſin*;
Ambitious to be foremoſt of the throng;
They aim t'excel: gradations are contemn'd:
To be *ſuperlatives* in guilt their mark,
Their deareſt, only wiſh. The centre this,
Round which inceſſantly they madly whirl;
Increaſing faſt its gravitating power
Till (their ſad orbits leſſening by degrees)
They daſh againſt the centre, and are loſt.

See yon decrepid letcher! How he ſtands
Diſtinguiſh'd! Much by years impair'd, but more
By ſad o'erpowering luſt; ſtill would he feel
The fire ignoble Nature well denies

To wintry age. Deep-learn'd in wickedneſs,
Fain would he ſtill the fruit forbidden taſte.
Nor ſtops the monſter here: a glow unnatural
His mind inflames: old S-D-M lends her aid;
And ſtimulates the wiſh fair Modeſty
Forbids to name. Still longing to be deem'd
A BUCK, coſmetics he inceſſant plies,
The ravages of Time, Intemperance, Luſt
To hide from view, and be for ever young.
Effeminate, he longs to ſpread a bloom
O'er wither'd nature; and, with art, deceive
The gay and wanton. His declining days,
Of ſolar revolutions near fourſcore
Have number'd; yet, regardleſs of the count,
The *Preſent* all his care employs: the *Future*
He proud contemns, the bane of wanton mirth.
The *World* his GOD, his HEAVEN, his *only* HOPE,
He riots in th' extravagance of ſenſe;
Nor heſitates t'affront the GREAT SUPREME;
Nor trembles at his own approaching doom.

Maugre his D-c-l c-r-n-t, he wears
The brutal form; and bids the paſſions reign
O'er all that conſtitutes the man *immortal.*
O glorious elevation of the ſoul,
From grovelling depths of Rationality
Diſguſting, to the bliſsful heights of Inſtinct!
If the bold ſway of Paſſion dignifies
The ſoul; let kind PHILOSOPHY declare
Why Reaſon cramps the pinions of Deſire,
And fetters all the man. The narrow mind
Debas'd the great deſign of human life
Not comprehends; nor where true pleaſure lies
Conceal'd from ſenſual graſp. VIRTUE alone
Refines the thought; exalts the ſoul to bliſs
Pure, intellectual, worthy of our kind.

Obſerve that painted butterfly! She ranks
The honorable: ſhe too, *a la mode,*
Laughs at the NAME INEFFABLE, which fills
Archangel ſpirits with ſublimeſt joy.
Celeſtial pleaſures proudly ſcorn'd, her paſſions

Senſual

Senſual and ſin-deprav'd to gratify,
Her only ſtudy, and her conſtant care.
The delicacy, we in female minds
Delight to view, ſhe tramples on diſdainful:
Looſe ſonnets, jeſts obſcene, and rich perfumes
Grace out her toilette, and her hours employ.

Now, raging with internal flames impure,
Artful ſhe ſpreads her train to catch the eye,
And rouſe the paſſions: nor the ſacred bond
Of holy marriage can th' intrigue prevent:
Virtuous domeſtic love deſpis'd, her wiſhes
Unbounded graſp the world. Now bold ſhe heads
The nightly *female club*, where fierce demoniacs,
With horrid din ſalute her Q——N of H-LL;
And clamorous ſhouts re-echo through the air.

REFLECTION! oft thy power from deadly fang
Of fierce Deſtruction liberates the mind
Guilt-preſs'd and ſad: O deep impreſs her ſoul
With moral ſentiment! Alas! thou flieſt

The

The wretched haunts of Wantonneſs and Vice:
No audience canſt thou here obtain. Full oft
This *Meſſalina* ſcouts thee as the foe
Of human joy; though GUILT alone can feel
Thy hate. Her wild imagination paints
Realities in mere aërial viſion:
She laughs at Heaven, nor dreams a future Hell,
Till her unalterable doom ſhe feels.

Where? what's the reaſon Vice, with lofty hand,
Rules abſolute o'er Dignities and Powers?
A mere non-entity is Providence?
Is there no GOD? Alas! that name's the rock
On which they ſplit: they, ſenſeleſs and deprav'd,
Submit vile drudges to the common foe
Of human kind. At the dread thought appall'd
Of retribution, eager they indulge
The fruitleſs wiſh it might a bugbear prove.
Deeper and deeper ſtill they ſink: they wiſh
Till wiſhes generate hope; hope, ripening faſt,
Grows up to firm perſuaſion; (if what needs

Perpetual

Perpetual rounds of drunkenneſs and ſin
To buoy it up, perſuaſion may be deem'd.)
Hapleſs they ſtrive, leſt Conſcience, deep alarm'd,
Should ſtrike with terrors through, to blunt the edge
Of keen conviction. Virtue is their ſcoff:
This they deſpiſe: this they contemptuous call
The *ignis fatuus* of a brain bewilder'd.
The truth ſublime obtains their loudeſt laugh:
The Bible is their *Jeſt-book*, and their ſport.

VILIO, foul name! derides his maker GOD:
He ſets up ridicule and wit, the teſt
Severe of ſober truth: vain artifice!
The muſe has known his pointed, venom'd ſhafts
Levell'd malicious at the ſacred rite,
By which the SAVIOR GOD his love diſplays,
In ſtriking ſymbols, to a fallen world.
That love he ſingles out the but of ſcorn!
In proud deriſion, he the garb aſſum'd
Of ſacred office, and preſumptuous gave

The holy emblems to a ſtubborn *aſs*:
Spurning alike at MAN, RELIGION, GOD.

Deteſted wretch! more vile and brutiſh he,
Than vileſt of the *aſinarian* kind!
Why didſt thou not, thou Arm omnipotent!
Quick hurl down bolts of vengeance on his head?
Thou Earth! why not extended wide thy jaws
The monſter to devour? Why not, ye Flames!
From ſubterraneous caverns burſting awful,
Prey on his vitals?

O THOU GOD BENIGN!

Forgive the rovings of the muſe, indignant,
When foul-mouth'd Obloquy attempts to fix
On thy perfections vaſt, ineffable.
Earth, air, and ſeas, and flames thy ſervants are,
Waiting thy ſovereign mandate: ſhouldſt *thou* ſpeak,
Inſtant all Nature would obedient join
The dread commiſſion to fulfil. The muſe
Her forward zeal now checks, and full approves

Thy

Thy wiſer plan. Forbearance marks thy conduct:
Rebellious mortals not *immediate* feel
Thy burning wrath; it lingers on its way:
Yet, the ſure period will arrive, when Mercy
Shall wing her diſtant flight: then, whelm'd in ruin,
The rebel ſinner ſhall eternal lie.

Laugh'ſt thou at yonder chriſtian, who believes
Some high myſterious truths, the ſoul of man
Finite, deprav'd, not comprehends? Go, learn
In Nature's ſchool her government and laws.
Explain th' attractive power; and force repulſive:
Deſcribe the laws of foliage: tell mankind
By what myſterious virtue plants aſſume
Each its peculiar form. Thy puny ſoul
A planetary ſyſtem might create
In equal time: yet theſe thou firm believeſt.
Within thyſelf look deep: e'en thy effrontery
Ne'er once a principle of thought in man
Denied: yet fails thy boaſted wiſdom here
In explanation. Yonder chriſtian, VILIO!

Reveres the DEITY; his word reveres:
What GOD affirms, though far above the ken
Of mortals, he receives. GOD ſpeaks! know this!
'Tis Faith's *foundation*; Faith's *indemnity*:
Let Earth adore the myſtery HEAVEN reveals.

GOD! awful name! that name thy pride contemns:
Fain would thy wiſhes hurl him from his throne
Tremendous, built on firmeſt baſe ſecure;
And quick annihilate: thy ſenſual mind
Longs to believe *no* JUDGE OF HUMAN ACTIONS.
Thine intereſt moves the wiſh: yet oft thy conſcience,
Though fear'd, miſgives thee. Ah! what meant that pang
Deep-felt; and rouſing all thy fear? It ſpeaks
Aloud the GOD. Go, VILIO! look around thee:
Obſerve yon vaſt expanſe: there Nature ſhines
In dazling ſplendor; and confounds thee quite.
World after world ſtill darting on the eye;
Their orbits, ſymmetry, uſe, diſtances
All, all beſpeak th' Intelligence Divine
That gave them birth. Triumphs the GOD majeſtic

Here:

Here : vaſt unbounded ſkill, omnipotence,
Benignity ſtrike, deep-impreſs'd, the ſoul!

Go, read in Nature's animating page :
Read the DIVINITY in blazing ſuns :
Thence downward trace him to the leafy blade.
No ; ſtop : attend where young APISTO, dying,
Writes to his brother Atheiſt ; writes to *thee*
In nervous ſtrain. " I write," he ſays, " but who?
Who his own tragedy can, tearleſs, paint?
Who, without horror, of his own d-mn-tion
Can copy out the ſeal? There is a GOD
I *know* : his wrath my breaſt diſtracted feels.
A GOD! tormenting thought! Annihilation!
Deep cover me from his all-piercing eye.
Annihilation! vain idea! a HELL
Flaming, *eternal*, is prepar'd : theſe pangs
I feel the earneſt of my endleſs doom."
Thus wrote APISTO ; then, deſpairing, died!
Let dying horrors rouſe thy ſceptic ſoul

To ſolemn thought : nor longer mock the Being,
Whoſe potent arm deſtroys thee in a trice.

Dark is the proſpect ! thick the baneful gloom
Hangs round theſe titled *worms*, theſe gaudy *atoms !*
Here INFIDELITY, without diſguiſe,
In fulleſt blaze of noon, with haughty ſtrides,
Stalks open. Here the LIBERTINE, ſecure,
The nobleſt ſkill of human kind outbraves ;
The power defies, and juſtice of a GOD.
While Reaſon, with impartial eye, looks on,
What men *nobility* erroneous call,
Here, infamy appears, and *vile diſgrace*.
Titles juſt ſerve in apteſt terms t'expreſs
To what degrees of guilt their haughty owners
Have well attain'd. O peerleſs YOUNG ! with thee,
Fain would celeſtial powers awake the lyre ;
Exulting Nature fain would join the ſong ;
And ſhout theſe INFIDELS *reclaim'd :* but ah !
Conviction's forceful arrows not prevail

To pierce the ſtubborn wretch by Vice enſlav'd :
More yielding to the touch caſe-harden'd ſteel !

As ÆTNA bold, the ſulphurous ſtream emits
Burning and hideous, drenching deep in death
Whole neighboring villages ; ſo runs the torrent
Rapid and deathful of infectious vice
From rank to rank, o'erwhelming as it goes
Myriads in awful ruin. Diſſipation,
Debauchery, Riot, Gaming all the land
Lay waſte, deep-preſs'd with guilt, and groaning loud.

Yet ſome there are of noble name and birth,
(Too few alas !) their dignity who feel,
Superior to the madneſs of the age ;
Who on a level with the guilty throng
Diſdain to ſtand. Nobility appears
Majeſtic here ; and ſweetly elevates
To cloſe affinity with native ſkies.
Yes ; the glad muſe could name her noble few,
Who to the DEITY their homage pay,

In low proſtration falling at his feet,
With awe profound. POLLIO the muſe has heard
In pleaſing moral ſtrains the GOD adore.
Waiting the hour that wafts to bliſs empyrial,
AMINTO too, and TREVIA ſtedfaſt lean
On that all-potent arm, ſuſtaining well
The univerſe: nor deign they to defile
Their coronets, in vaſſalage to bow,
Inglorious ſtoop! where Guilt and Death prevail.

So, when the loaded fleet defied the ſtorm,
Teeming with death, the foaming billows burſt,
And drove impetuous to the yawning deep
The hands affrighted; here and there a bark
The muſe has known to ſkim the briny wave,
Stem the fierce torrent, and outlive the gale;
Then drop in peaceful port the maſſy anchor.

With deep amaze I turn my eye appall'd
To where Religioniſts in maſquerade

Appear;

Appear; and ſportful dance along, with pride
Elate, and deeply vers'd in dark deceit.

Yon venerable gothic pile, uprear'd
By pious hands, the ſeat of pure devotion,
Too oft within its hoary walls has circled
A race of libertines in *black*. That wretch,
Lur'd powerful by the tithe, the glebe, and mitre,
All principle renounces; ſwears, ſubſcribes
Or right or wrong, without examine, all
Which guards the paſſage to the ſacred deſk.
He ſwears the bible true, but not believes:
A very Infidel! neglected this,
(Save to provide a motto for his lecture)
TULLY he chooſes, SENECA, or PLATO,
His wiſer guides. Their favorite maxims he
Approves as *modiſh*; recommends as ſafe
And rational: nor other baſis lays,
On which to build immortal hope ſecure.

Wonderous

Wonderous enlightener of the moral world!
Diſpel theſe darker Goſpel ſhades: illumine
Our minds benighted: lead us into day:
Thy *faſhionable* ſyſtem firm uphold.
Ah! no: thou reverend trifler! tell the world
The plan on which mankind may *ſafely* DIE.
Where ſouls immortal lie at ſolemn ſtake,
Let not the doctrine truckle to the *mode*:
Inform the multitude, from *principle*
Religion ſprings, or not exiſts at all.
Then, as the tender roſe, in generous ſoil
Well planted, the ſalubrious juice imbibes;
Springs up; enlivens, decorates the ſcene;
And ſheds her fragrant odors wide around;
So ſhall immortal minds the influence feel
Of pureſt virtue; well adorn the world;
And joy celeſtial univerſal reign.

VENALIO here the gown aſſumes. He bears
The ſacred character; receives the pay;
But not fulfils the office. Other views

Than

Than rouſe the honeſt paſtor's care aſſiduous
His mind pervert. With ancient HORACE, he
Odi profanum vulgus conſtant ſings.
LAMBETH his mark; for this he meanly cringes;
Flatters his patron's vices; frames his lecture
In ſoothing ſtrains and ſoft t'amuſe the ear
Of Quality. Devoted are his hours
To maſquerades, and company, and routs;
His ſure relief, when ſurfeited with prayer.

See where the hungry ſheep neglected lie!
Save huſks and ſtraw, no ſuſtenance they find.
Languid they droop, unheeded by the ſhepherd:
(Th' expected ſhearing time alone he heeds)
High ſwol'n with wind, and parch'd with raging thirſt,
They breathe their laſt in horror and deſpair.

To thee, VENALIO, clings the weighty charge
Of murdering ſouls! Thou libertine! the thought
Should ſtrike thee deep. The period haſtens on,
When, nor high patronage, nor fond careſſes

Of pamper'd courts, nor e'en the lordly rochet
Can from the potent arm of vengeance ſcreen thee.
Go, if thou canſt, with terrors flaſhing awful,
Go ſlight paſtoreal duties : ſtarve the flock :
Let ravenous beaſts their appetite well glut :
So, when the ſolemn curtain drops, and ſhuts
The cloſing ſcene of life, the hapleſs beings
Thy folly ruin'd ſhall thy fiends become ;
And dart eternal horrors through thy ſoul.

Yonder the paſtoral ſtaff NOVITIUS bears !
Vain are his declamations ! he aſcends
On wings of Speculation to the clouds.
His doctrine by polemic ſmoke obſcur'd,
He not diſcerns where with ſublimeſt truths
Blends ſweetly moral ſuaſion. Loud he talks
Of purpoſes ſupreme, inſcrutable,
But not perſuades a ſinner once to pray.
All moral agency he ſcouts : his genius,
When doctrine is to moral purpoſe ſkilful
Applied, the cuſtom arrogantly deems

A bold perverſion of the ſolemn plan
Form'd gracious by the DEITY BENIGN.

Doſt pride thyſelf commiſſion'd from above,
A teacher of religion? Why reject
The pleaſing mode, effectual, well eſtabliſh'd
By the OMNISCIENT SAVIOR of mankind?
See in the Goſpel the unerring plan,
Where doctrine, duty, promiſe, threatening, all,
All in their turns hold up to man himſelf;
Hold up the GOD, the friend of human hope
Boundleſs, immortal. Rational is man?
Why not his conſcience rouſe in cloſe addreſs?
Heaven's purpoſes myſterious, unreveal'd,
View not thy rule of action: go, fulfil
The wiſe inſtructions of the SAVIOR GOD:
Shake off th' inglorious ſhackles of the mind:
Wide let PHILANTHROPY extend her wing;
And waft us to the towering heights of bliſs.

Thus, when the artiſt's pencil ſkilful draws
The landſcape; well diverſifies the ſcene;
Careful the varying ſhades and folds connects;
The eye attentive dwells upon the view;
Charm'd are the ſenſes; raviſh'd all the ſoul;
Unuſual joys the raptur'd breaſt pervade.

IGNORIO here, vain guide of human ſouls!
Sports with our feelings, and deludes our hope:
A burleſque on religion his harangue!
Thoſe oracles, which human woe diſplay,
Tell man his ruin, and his views direct
For heavenly influence to the DEITY,
Madly he wreſts: he *thence* attempts to prove
Not true what *they affirm*: their ſoul, their ſubſtance
He diſregards. Merit the ground illuſive
Of his high claim to yonder ſkies, he, proud,
A moral dignity to man aſcribes,
In man not found. Talks he of CALVARY's groans?
That blood immaculate, by fouleſt ſin
Of human kind preſs'd out; by GOD decreed

Guilt's

Guilt's bleſt ablution ; arrogant he claims
The ſad, ſin-ſtain'd obedience of a worm
To varniſh over, and entrap the GOD,
Deceiv'd by lucid ſplendor. Ignorant
Of righteouſneſs *imputc*, reveal'd to man ;
Seeking his *legal* righteouſneſs t'eſtabliſh ;
He not ſubmits to *that* by Heaven prepar'd.

Why trifles he with themes eternal, ſolemn ?
His pride the bowl, he ſets up future worlds
At nine pins : loud he boaſts his brawny arm,
With eaſy bowl or tip, can well the game
Secure. Nor heeds he that diviner influence,
The Goſpel free reveals, which can alone
Worms ſo debas'd prepare to meet the plaudit
Of HEAVEN'S HIGH SOVEREIGN. Let the prater ceaſe;
Nor longer mock our hopes, nor cheat our ſouls.

PRIDE ! thou deluder of the moral world !
Thou tyranneſs of ages ! why uprear
Thy throne preſumptuous in IGNORIO's breaſt ?

Why

Why arm an atom impotent, deprav'd,
Againſt all-potent HEAVEN, the only ſource
Of joy to man? why here thy lofty creſt
Erect, where leaſt of all thou haſt to boaſt?
Canſt thou the paſs ſecure, that leads to Life;
And make us mortals bleſt? Pride in Religion!
Deteſtful name! let darkneſs, ſuch as wrapt
Infernal ſquadrons ouſted from the ſkies,
Where flames but ſerv'd to paint the ſcene more dreary,
(By MILTON ſung, dear favorite of the muſe)
The name, the paſſion bury from our view.

To HEAVEN man owes his *all* beneath the ſkies:
From thence derives *all* hope of future joy.
The DEITY benevolent, profuſe
Beſtows on man his ſovereign, choiceſt gifts.
WISDOM INEFFABLE the plan ſtruck out
Stupendous of ſalvation, not deſerv'd
By rebel worms. OMNIPOTENCE ſecures
The bliſs man's frailty knows not how to graſp.
Gracious the GOD points out the ſteep aſcent

That

That leads to Life ; ſuſtains along the road ;
Bears man above each ruffling ſtorm ; and crowns
At laſt, his hope with *beatific viſion*.

Man ! grateful, conſcious of the gift benign,
Thy obligation feel : acknowledge HIM
Thy FRIEND, thy ALL, in TIME, in DEATH, FOR EVER.
Walk in the footſteps conſecrate by blood,
Effus'd thy ſtains t'ablute. Confide in HIM,
Sole *Guardian*, and the *Centre* of thy wiſh.
Let warmeſt Gratitude and Awe profound
Attend thy every ſtep ; nor once indulge
The bold idea of worth in human kind.

FIDELIO well I knew ! He, not impell'd
By thirſt of gold, with generous heart obtain'd
The cure of ſouls. He felt the ſovereign ſway
Of pure Religion ; long'd the genial flame
T'impart to all around, and make them bleſt.
For this, the ſacred mines he dug inceſſant ;
Thence drew perpetual treaſure, all his flock,

Dear

Dear lov'd, enriching faſt. The moral doctrine
In ſtrains of pleaſing eloquence he pour'd
O'er all the mind. The audience, pleas'd, I've ſeen
In deep attention catch the flowing ſounds,
Diffuſing joy, and melting all the heart;
The joy increaſing while they mark'd his ſteps:
His life the counterpart of all he ſaid!

As when the Laplander, long wrapt in gloom,
Beholds the genial, animating ray,
His frozen limbs revive, and joyful glow
With new returning life, and all the land
Looks blithe and gay; ſo let BRITANNIA feel
Virtue's refreſhful beam the miſt diſpelling
Of Villainy and Woe: throughout her coaſts
Let Truth and Goodneſs, kindred graces! ſhine,
Infuſing life, invigorating All:
Then ſhall our tongues commix in mirthful ſtrain;
And joys perpetual ſportive play around.

5 0059

FINIS.